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Governance in sport-for-development: Problems and possibilities of (not) learning from international development

Introduction

Defined in its broadest sense, governance 'refers to issues of social coordination and the nature of patterns of rule' (Bevir, 2011: p1). Usage of the term is 'ubiquitous' (*ibid.*) across policy and research in many different fields, including international development. Conversely, the lack of explicit or in-depth consideration of governance both in policy documents or academic literature associated with the emerging field of sport-for-development (SfD) is a significant lacuna. For example, despite the global status and specific subtitle of the policy document, *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments* (SDPIWG, 2008a)*,* only 29 of its 272 pages are specifically dedicated to discussion of governance issues such as the involvement of, co-ordination amongst, and resource mobilisation by state and non-state agencies in SfD. With limited exceptions (e.g. SDPIWG, 2008b; Kay and Dudfield, 2013), global SfD policy documents have instead been largely focused both in structure and content on the implementation of SfD activities

and their effectiveness in achieving specific development outcomes (e.g. United Nations, 2003, 2006; SDPIWG, 2007).

This policy orientation is mirrored in a significant strand of SfD research that adopts a rationalistic approach to examining and evaluating the micro-level implementation of specific SfD projects (Schulenkorf et al., 2015). Alternatively, for those interested in governance, critiques of structured global power relations and inequalities found in a second prominent strand of SfD research have greater relevance. However, despite being informed by macro-level theories, studies in this second strand often adopt a substantially narrower empirical focus in investigating specific SfD curricula (Forde, 2014), individual projects (e.g. Manley et al., 2014), management practices (e.g. Nichols et al., 2009) and overseas volunteers (e.g. Darnell, 2010; Forde, 2013). With these two strands accounting for a significant proportion of SfD research to date, 'meso-level' analyses of SfD and especially those that draw on empirical data across a range of institutional actors in the field are significantly rarer (for exceptions see, for example, Giulianotti, 2011; Lindsey and Banda, 2011; Sanders et al., 2014).

That meso-level SfD governance has received limited attention is, therefore, but one consequence of the narrowly focused data collection common to research projects within this field. Conversely, multiple conceptions of governance have featured heavily in international development policies and have been subject to substantial academic research and debate (Pomerantz, 2011). Learning from such approaches and insights, therefore, opens possibilities not only for improved SfD scholarship (Darnell and Black, 2011) but also for addressing common calls to improve the contribution and integration of sport, as a potentially novel approach, towards common development outcomes and mainstream development policies (SDPIWG, 2008a; Kay and Dudfield, 2013).

Within this article, empirical data from Ghana and Tanzania, as well as findings from other SfD studies, are initially compared with development studies literature to demonstrate that identifiable limitations of common 'project-based' approaches in SfD mirror those widely critiqued from the 1990s in other development sectors (Hope, 2013). In the same period and in response to such critiques, increased recognition of the need for more systematic governance within international development gave rise to the instigation of, so called, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps) (Hill, 2002; Gore, 2013). While there remains no

single, universally-agreed definition of SWAps (van Esch et al. 2010), the term represented efforts to improve development governance within specific sectors in particular countries through leadership by the domestic government and co-ordination amongst donors and other stakeholders. For example, Jeppson (2002) reports on the advent of a SWAp in the Ugandan health sector, led by the Ministry of Health in partnership with donors and civil society representatives, that resulted in the development and implementation of a new national health policy in 1999.

More broadly, SWAps were promoted through seminal policy documents published by the World Bank (1993), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) and the World Health Organisation (Cassells, 1997). SWAps have been subsequently instigated in various countries across Africa and elsewhere in the global South, most commonly in key development sectors, such as education and health, but also in others including agriculture, energy, water and sanitation (Hope, 2013). Subsequent global summits on 'aid effectiveness' held in Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011) have reaffirmed the ongoing importance and relevance of key features of SWAps (Hill et al., 2012; MacEwan and Mawdsley, 2012; Peters et al., 2013).

In contrast, however, only a single reference to SWAps can be found in global SfD policy documents, appearing in a single sentence towards the end of *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace* (SDPIWG, 2008a: p259). This appears to be a significant oversight given the prominent and prevalent instigation of SWAps across international development to address problematic issues also identified in SfD currently. It is as a result that SWAps provide a valuable 'analytic lens' (van Esch et al., 2010: p8) to explore the possibilities of, and challenges to, the emergence of more systematic governance in SfD. Comparing examples and perspectives offered in respect of SfD in Ghana and Tanzania with key features of SWAPs and literature on their implementation in other development sectors enables a nuanced analysis which draws important learning for policy, practice and future research in SfD. Preceding the presentation of empirical analyses, the study's research design and methods will be explained in the next section.

Research Design and Methods

Data for this article are drawn from a wider study of 'Sustainable Development and African Sport' undertaken through a partnership of five universities from the

United Kingdom, Ghana, Tanzania and Australia. Ghana and Tanzania provided appropriate contexts for this study for a number of reasons. Geographically located in West and East Africa, Ghana and Tanzania emerged from British colonisation in 1957 and 1961 respectively, driven by their pan-Africanist leaders, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. However, their current development status differs somewhat with Ghana currently classified as lower middle income country, compared to the low income country status of Tanzania. The sporting histories of the two countries also differ with Ghana being represented and succeeding in continental and global competitions on a more consistent basis. On the other hand, the incorporation of sport into international development efforts has a longer history in Tanzania with Norwegian interventions in the 1980s being forerunners of the subsequent global expansion of interest and activity in the field (Straume, 2012).

Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with representatives of an array of indigenous, in-country and international agencies involved with or providing support for SfD in each country. The ongoing process of identifying these stakeholders drew on the expert knowledge of both in-country and external members of the research team, internet-based searches and snowball sampling from initial interviews (Gratton & Jones, 2010). As categorised in table

1, a total of 38 interviews were undertaken by the author (often in tandem with in-country members of the research team) across both governmental and non-governmental organisations in Ghana and Tanzania as well as with international agencies providing support from overseas / external locations[1]. While it is not claimed that interviews were undertaken with all stakeholders associated with SfD in either country, the sample does encompass a larger number and range of key stakeholders associated with SfD in specific countries than any other study that the author can currently identify.

Table 1: Interview Sample by Organisation Type

Ghana	Government or State Agency	3
	International Agencies or NGOs	4
	Indigenous NGOs	9
Tanzania	Government or State Agency	2
	International Agencies or NGOs	2
	Indigenous NGOs	7
International Donors	Government or State Agency	3
	NGOs	8

Interviews covered a range of topics relevant to this article and varied according to the status and location of the particular organisation. Common themes explored across interviews included organisational roles within SfD, their acquisition and / or distribution of funding, and relationships with other SfD and development agencies. In line with the wider focus of the research on 'sustainable development', interviewees were also asked about current challenges in SfD and how it could become more sustainably established in the future. When transcribed in full, data from interviews ran to 198,598 words and an initial process of data reduction (Gratton & Jones, 2010) involved identifying all excerpts that were considered as potentially relevant to subsequent and specific analyses. For this article, an iterative process was then undertaken which combined inductive and deductive analysis (Seale, 2004). Perspectives on challenges and future possibilities for SfD identified from the data were continually compared and interpreted with regard to accounts of project-based approaches and SWAps identified in the development studies literature. While this analysis did not separate Ghana and Tanzania as distinct case studies, data associated with each country was continuously compared. As a result, relevant similarities and differences across the two countries are indicated across the following sections that, in turn, problematize existing approaches

commonly found in SfD and then explore the possibilities of more systematic governance within SfD.

Limitations of Project-Based Approaches to SfD

Within a number of different sectors, approaches to development that prioritised and resulted in panoplies of stand-alone, narrowly-focused and time-limited projects[2] were widely recognised and problematized from the early 1990s (Hill, 2002; Samoff, 2004; Batley, 2006; Brinkeroff, 2008; Cabral, 2009; Berry, 2010; Rose, 2010; van Esch et al., 2010; Peters et al., 2013; Ulikpan et al.,2012; Gore, 2013; Ziai, 2013). Common characteristics and historic limitations of project-based approaches identified across the range of cited authors are effectively summarised by Chansa et al. (2008: p245):

> In the early 1990s … numerous concerns were raised about ineffectiveness [of project-based approaches] in fostering sustainable improvements in health. Commonly cited concerns were that such approaches are: narrow in scope; lead to fragmentation of the sector and high transaction costs; create risks for duplication of efforts; and weaken government capacity and local ownership.

Data from a significant proportion of interviewees, supported by further

literature, demonstrates the relevance of such historical critiques to present-day

SfD through the following two subsections. First, it is established that individual

SfD projects share common characteristics that have previously restricted

projects in other development sectors to 'generat[ing] temporary benefits to

limited groups of people' (van Esch et al., 2010: p1). Second, collective

problems identified in the preceding quote and other development literature are

linked to the prevalence of project-based approaches in SfD.

Characteristics and problems common amongst individual SfD Projects

In respect of both their focus and targeting, SfD projects in Ghana and Tanzania

share the narrowness of those previously identified in other development

sectors. First, most SfD projects in both countries specifically focus on

delivering sport-based activities, despite many local stakeholders indicating that

these efforts are impeded, as they are elsewhere in Africa (Akindes and Kirwan,

2009), by a lack of appropriate facilities and equipment. The problems of SfD

projects, therefore, represent a mirror image of those previously identified in

other development sectors as narrow projects constructed education and health

facilities that subsequently went underutilised due to limited resources (Brinkeroff, 2008). Second, many SfD projects in Ghana and Tanzania are narrowly delimited by being delivered in particular geographical areas or by targeting particular participant groups defined by age or 'at risk' characteristics. Coalter (2013) and Darnell and Hayhurst (2014) critique such targeting as being representative of a common 'deficiency' model in SfD. Targeted projects may not necessarily be ineffective in their narrow range of operation but, equally, do give rise to an 'unevenness' of provision previously identified in other development sectors (Hill, 2002: p1728).

Data from representatives of international agencies, in particular, also reinforce common critiques of the 'donor-driven' nature of both development and SfD projects (Hope, 2013: p624; Akindes and Kirwan, 2009). As indicated by a representative of a UK-based organisation, the capacity to initiate and fund projects put international donors in a position of power: 'in a sense when we go overseas we've got something that we're really giving people and they're always going to say yes'. Smaller international SfD NGOs may be especially likely to 'offer' narrowly-focused projects, with another UK-based interviewee explaining their approach as 'want[ing] to drop our niche little unique thing into the existing activity that's taking place in a country'. As such, rather than design

SfD activities for local needs, it is local and indigenous agencies that are expected to adapt in order to integrate projects proposed by international agencies.

Further, SfD projects are commonly funded only for time-limited periods, even in those limited cases where support was received from in-country benefactors. The resultant implications both for projects' approaches and long-term effectiveness were highlighted by an interviewee from UK-based international agency:

> It still takes about a year of the programme on the ground for it to properly get going. And then you need a year for it to be going and then that final year for you to think right, we're now thinking really hard about how we keep it going.

This quote also speaks of a particular approach to sustainability that was commonly identified across many SfD projects, namely, seeking to continue activities after the expiration of a period of initial funding. Critiques of this approach by development and SfD researchers (Altenberg, 2007; Brinkeroff, 2008; Donnelly et al., 2011; Schnitzer et al., 2013) were also recognised by

some interviewees. A representative of a UK-based donor spoke of the 'hypocrisy' of seeking to address project sustainability by making 'some magic' by which funds could be generated in-country. Likewise, one Ghanaian interviewee spoke of 'not having an answer' to the issue of sustainability when:

> It might be difficult to do within the two years that we've got to deliver, find out what sustainability is in the first place, what it means for us, what it means for the funders, what it means for the government and [then] pull all of it together.

In practice, as identified in other development sectors (Altenberg, 2007; Brinkeroff, 2008), sustainability and thus long-term impact often proved an unrealistic aspiration as many SfD projects, identified both by interviewees and over the course of the study itself, come to a halt at the end of initial funding.

Collective Consequences of Project-Based Approaches in SfD

Collectively, across other development sectors, project-based approaches have been inefficient (Peters et al., 2013) and have resulted in problems of fragmentation and competition (Hill, 2002; Cabral, 2009; Ulikpan et al., 2012).

Again, data from a range of interviewees reinforced recognition of similar issues in SfD generally (e.g. Kidd, 2008; Hayhurst, 2009; Guilanotti, 2011) and amongst particular sets of NGOs (Hayhurst et al., 2011; Lindsey and Banda, 2011; Sanders et al., 2014). Fragmentation was regarded by interviewees in both countries as a significant challenge, as represented by an English interviewee who worked for an international agency in Tanzania:

> There's so many people doing so many things but people don't know what each other are doing a lot of the time, and there's not that much communication. And there's a lot of overlap as well. You'll go to some regions and two different organisations are doing the same thing, sometimes with the same beneficiaries but not aware that each other are doing it. And, you know, I think you can waste a lot of energy and waste a lot of opportunity as well.

Such fragmentation also affected the mainly donor-driven process of selecting in-country partners to deliver particular projects. Some international agencies independently undertook initial planning processes for projects that involved extensive mapping and appraisal of in-country organisations. Especially for smaller international agencies, such strategic processes were often avoided in

favour of selecting in-country partners based on personal connections.
Irrespective of approach, it was commonly identified that it took significant time
to ensure that plans for internationally-supported projects were adapted to
particular in-country contexts. Consequentially, project-based delivery of SfD
activities was undertaken at full capacity and scale only for shortened periods,
as the quote regarding project lifecycles in the previous subsection indicated.

Moreover, problems of duplication and competition were widely identified by a
range of interviewees. Even a UK-based representative from a well-resourced
international NGO spoke of 'battling' against other similar SfD agencies for
funds. A Ghanaian interviewee recognised the significance of problems arising
from similar competition within the global South:

> One of the biggest challenges African NGOs face, even other NGOs
> outside of the African continent face. We compete with each other rather
> than working with each other. Sometimes I think we're so wasteful with
> our monies.

More specifically, interviewees from both Ghana and Tanzania spoke of the
difficulties and time taken gaining trust and acceptance in communities whose

experiences of previous NGO interventions have been negative. Duplication in the design and production of multiple SfD curricula orientated to similar outcomes was also identified across international agencies working in Ghana and Tanzania, as is more widely the case in SfD (see sportanddev.org for examples),

With the fragmentation, competition and inefficiencies identified here in respect of Ghana and Tanzania being more widely represented across SfD, it is important to acknowledge well argued claims that these problems are a reflection of the neo-liberal context of SfD (Hayhurst, 2009; Hayhurst et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it is not contradictory to recognise specific implications of the meso-level analysis made possible by the unique dataset used here and comparison with previously underutilised development studies literature. The association made in the preceding subsections between the prevalence of project-based approaches and prominent problems in SfD has not previously been acknowledged. Importantly, it was as a result of previous and similar analyses across international development that there came to be widespread recognition of the need for improvements in governance that would systematically incorporate both donors and in-country recipients of development aid (Pomerantz, 2011).

From their initial emergence in the mid-1990s, SWAps represented a commonly and widely promoted mechanism to address requirements for more systematic development governance. If the prevalence and problems of project-based approaches had been one consequence of imposition of Structural Adjustment Plans on African countries in the 1980s, then the subsequent promotion of SWAps by global institutions represented a shift from, but not necessarily a challenge to, their previous pursuit of neo-liberal policies (Peters et al. 2013). The relevance to SfD of the problems and context to which SWAps responded indicates that learning may be valuably generated from analysing their potential applicability within Ghanaian and Tanzanian SfD. It is to this analysis that the article now turns.

Sector-Wide Approaches: Potential and Learning for Sport-for-Development

Flexibility in the interpretation and implementation of SWAps serves to enhance the feasibility that it may appropriate to instigate them in new sectors, such as SfD (Sundewall and Sahlin-Andersson, 2006). Cabral (2009) states 'it is frequently emphasised that a SWAp should not be seen as a blueprint but … that SWAp features are guiding principles setting a direction of change'. A synthesis of different accounts (Samoff, 2004; Sundewall and Sahlin-Andersson, 2006; Cabral, 2009; Peters et al., 2013; Hope, 2013), therefore enables the identification of key features of SWAps, as presented in table 2. That these key features were designed to address those limitations of SfD project-based approaches that are summarised in the table again serves to reinforce their potential relevance to this field. The following three subsections will examine this potential relevance further.

Table 2: Key features of SWAps designed to address limitations of project-based approaches

Key Features of SWAps	Limitations of Project-Based Approaches to SfD	
	Common across individual projects	**Collective consequences**
'Country-Led' Governmental Leadership … …developed at national level within particular development sectors … …giving priority to in-country needs and policies.	Donor-driven instigation and design	Local appraisals undertaken independently by multiple international agencies
Inclusive Platforms for Policy Engagement and Dialogue… … across array of governmental, non-governmental and international stakeholders.		Fragmentation, overlap, duplication and unnecessary competition
Co-Ordinated Funding, Support and Implementation … … including harmonisation of donor approaches over a medium-term timescale … … and utilisation of common planning, capacity building and management approaches.	Narrow focus and / or geographical scope Time-limited funding with associated inefficiencies and limited sustainability	Uneven provision Unrealistic expectations of long-term impact

SWAps Key Features: Country- and Government-Led Development

The principle that SWAps should be 'country-led' responds to the donor-driven nature of project-based approaches. Similarly, there was broad support across interviewees for more localised ownership of SfD, albeit with views differentiated across two specific dimensions. First, the language used by overseas representatives of international agencies suggested that rationales for local ownership ranged from the principled ('solutions to development are with people in-country'), through the practical (e.g. 'they're better than us at doing it already, they're local, they're the experts') to the instrumental avoidance of dependency ('unless we're prepared to be a presence and be a resourcer, funder, for years to come, in the end it's their responsibility'). Second, opinions varied significantly as to the level to which ownership should be devolved. The views of some interviewees were aligned with SWAps in supporting greater ownership of SfD at the national-level. Other interviewees believed that the independence of individual locally-based organisations or collective ownership within particular communities would be more appropriate in ensuring SfD effectively addresses specific local needs. Further complexities in enabling localised ownership are reflected, for example, in the continued importance of traditional leaders in northern and rural Ghana whose role in local governance

is adjunct to structures of district and regional government that exist across the whole of the country. Irrespective, Cabral's (2009) recognition that national-level SWAps should not undermine effective community-based projects or activities remains important given that diverse and localised approaches may be more prevalent in SfD than commonly considered (Lindsey and Grattan, 2012).

It is, nevertheless, national governments that are expected to take a key role in ensuring that SWAps are country-led (Hope, 2013). The extent of 'political will' to enact this role has varied across SWAps (Peters et al., 2013: p888) and similarly represents a particular barrier with respect to SfD. In common with other African countries (Akindes and Kirwan, 2009; Banda, 2010), sport is not significantly prioritised by either the Ghanaian or Tanzanian government. Political interest in SfD, specifically, is further marginalised in comparison to elite sport in Tanzania and, especially, as a result of Ghana's relatively strong reputation in international competition. A further issue, that has also commonly affected SWAps and other development sectors (Cabral, 2009; Booth, 2011; Giri et al., 2013), is the temporal fragility of any degree of governmental support for SfD. Many interviewees identified that such support depends to a great extent on the interests of particular government ministers or officials whose time

in post may be limited, either as a result of elections or other local political factors[3].

Despite recognising these barriers, representatives of international and in-country NGOs, as well as government officials themselves, commonly expressed a desire for greater domestic government engagement in SfD in Ghana and Tanzania. Due to the limitations of sustainability and scale associated with project-based approaches, a number of interviewees desired the direct involvement of domestic government agencies in the implementation of SfD activities. However, particularly since global neo-liberal policies have forced the rolling back of African states, national governments commonly lack the resource capacity to directly provide universal services (Samson, 2006; Batley and Mcloughlin, 2010). In respect of sport, such governmental limitations were recognised by some Ghanaian and Tanzanian interviewees as well as by Keim and de Conning (2014) in other African countries.

Overall, general advocacy for domestic government involvement in SfD tended to obscure precision about the nature of that involvement. Cabral (2009: p24) identifies that determining the respective roles of government and the multiplicity of other stakeholders in particular development sectors renders the

'question "who does what?" [in SWAps] equally if not more important than the question of "what needs to be done?"'. One UK-based representative of an international agency, in particular, suggested a potentially clear distinction in roles:

> The policy environment … needs to be supportive. That is why we talk about government, government, government. But they are not the doers, you know? They don't deliver. It is civil society.

Instead, SWAps represent a more integrated form of governance with government leading policy co-ordination amongst multiple sectoral stakeholders. With such a role requiring fewer resources than direct implementation (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2010), SWAps offered an accommodation with reduced governmental capacities. The potential for governmental agencies to contribute, alongside other agencies, to more integrated SfD policy and implementation will continue to be considered in the next, as well as the subsequent, subsection.

SWAp Key Features: Inclusive Platforms for Policy Engagement and Dialogue

Associated with discussions in the preceding subsection, government leadership to instigate inclusive platforms to facilitate policy dialogue with and amongst other sectoral stakeholders was an important aspect of SWAps (Palmer, 2006; Cabral, 2009). Recognition of the need for an inclusive process of SfD policy development was indicated by a Tanzanian government official:

> We have learned that we need to make sure everybody comes on board … so that policy encompasses all the new ideas from different people, different organisations.

Moreover, government agencies in both Ghana and Tanzania have been involved in the instigation of platforms for policy dialogue between different stakeholders. As well as specific SfD conferences held in both countries, Tanzanian interviewees spoke of initial attempts to develop more long-standing platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement in SfD policy dialogue. Perhaps a more significant development was the instigation of a Youth Development through Sport (YDS) Network in Ghana which comprised representatives from both the National Sports Authority and a range of local NGOs.

However, challenges identified in developing inclusive platforms for SWAp policy dialogue (Cabral, 2009) are similarly identifiable in SfD. Historical mistrust between domestic governments and civil society organisations in various development sectors (Batley, 2006; Mundy et al., 2010) was also recognised by SfD interviewees in Ghana and Tanzania. For example, one Ghanaian civil society representative identified that issues of 'perception' and 'trust' had emerged as a result of the actions of some SfD NGOs. The consequent recognition by the same interviewee that 'the government is [only] interested in NGOs that are well established, have proper structures in place … and track records' had wider resonance. Within platforms for SfD policy dialogue, some smaller organisations were unrepresented and, as identified in other development sectors (Teamey, 2007; Batley and Mcloughlin, 2010; Mundy et al., 2010), larger NGOs and those with international connections commonly had greater voice and influence. A geographic dimension also affected inclusive representation with the YDS Network in Ghana solely comprising of Accra-based organisations and a 'national' SfD conference in Tanzanian largely being attended by organisations based in Dar es Salaam. Work being undertaken to map SfD organisations in Tanzania may help to address this issue and becomes feasible as the resource implications are, again, less significant than

requirements for other potential governmental roles (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2010)

There may, however, be a trade-off between inclusivity and collective co-ordination as has been especially the case with SWAps in other sectors that are broad in scope (Cabral, 2009; Gore, 2013). The prospective breadth or difficulties delimiting the scope of any potential SfD SWAp may be a particular challenge. Just as the contribution of SfD to all of the MDGs is globally promoted (UNoSDP, 2010), so SfD NGOs in Ghana and Tanzania variously seek to address a wide range of development outcomes. As a consequence, expressed aspirations for governmental involvement spread across ministries responsible for education and health, to give but two examples, as well as the particular ministry with responsibility for sport. Ghana and Tanzania's National Sports Council and Authority, respectively, also have remits that encompass SfD and traditional sports development. Organisations with primarily the latter remit, such as sporting federations and other sport-specific bodies, were also represented in some, but not all, SfD platforms in Tanzania and Ghana. In these regards, the caution offered by van Esch et al. (2011: p4) appears particularly apposite to SfD:

the complexity is daunting ... [given] a "sector" is not a firmly delineated "thing" neither horizontally or vertically – different actors will have different ideas about the boundaries, and whether these should be defined by institutions, desired outcomes, actors, interests – or a mixture of these and other parameters.

SWAp Key Features: Co-Ordinated Funding, Support and Implementation

While complexities associated with SfD may mirror those found in other development sectors, Samoff (2004) emphasises the expectation that SWAps move beyond policy dialogue to co-ordinate and enhance development implementation. The potential of realising some of the benefits of developing platforms for co-ordination was highlighted in respect of both Ghanaian and Tanzanian SfD. For example, as in SWAps (Gilling et al., 2001), realisation of the aspiration that the YDS Network serve as an 'entry point' (German Representative, International Agency) for SfD in Ghana could be valuable for both international and in-country SfD organisations. For the latter, engagement in the YDS Network was perceived as potentially bringing new funding opportunities as one Ghanaian representative of new and locally-established member organisation spoke of 'banking on meeting [international] organisations

… through this network so we can channel our communication and keep up [relationships] with them'. On the other hand, working through established networks could alleviate current inefficiencies as international SfD agencies independently commencing new projects undertook scoping processes of 'looking at what [domestic] governments are currently doing' and 'what our partners in-country saw as priorities' (UK-based Representative, International Agency).

If reducing such inefficiencies is an aspiration for SWAps (Altenberg, 2007; Hope, 2013), so have they sought to enable more co-ordinated approaches to capacity building (Hill, 2002; Peters et al., 2013). Again, both of these rationales chimed with a German interviewee's explanation of the support given by their international agency to the YDS Network in Ghana:

> There are already quite some initiatives there. And we didn't just want to support, like, individual initiatives but we wanted rather, actually, to make a contribution to sustainability and all that by bringing these organisations together and strengthening both their networking capacity but also their organisational capacity. (German Representative, International Agency)

Capacity building workshops through the YDS Network on topics such as fundraising went beyond the common focus of project-based approaches on training to deliver specific SfD activities. Similarly, support from International Inspiration to develop systems for monitoring and evaluation across SfD in Tanzania mirrored a key aspect of capacity building within many SWAps (Cabral, 2009; Hope, 2013).

While such forms of improved support from international agencies may be feasible through SWAps, achieving co-ordination and harmonisation across donors has proved particularly challenging in other development sectors (Hope, 2013) especially as it requires significant re-orientation of existing practices (Hill, 2002). Mutual awareness and dialogue was evident across international SfD agencies working in Ghana or Tanzania. However, examples of international co-ordination were largely limited to a small number of projects supported by donors that could themselves access or generate unrestricted funding, primarily from private sources. While achieving impact through such projects remains important within SWAps, there may be significant barriers to the systematic-level co-ordination and harmonisation of donor support that is also required (Samoff, 2004). There was recognition that working across domestic governments and civil society organisations was the preserve of larger

international agencies, including those representing overseas governments. However, such international agencies were themselves reliant on applying for time-limited funding from external sources. Similar funding restrictions have previously and variously damaged SWAps in other sectors through leading to the bypassing of domestic priorities (Peters et al., 2013), limiting any attempt to pool donor funding (Sundewall and Sahlin-Andersson, 2006, Booth, 2011) and have also stymied attempts to develop co-ordinated approaches to SfD monitoring and evaluation in Zambia (Lindsey et al., forthcoming). Moreover, co-ordination of support amongst international donors can be hampered by their desire for specific recognition of individual contributions (Samoff, 2004; Ulikpan et al., 2012). Therefore, while some larger international agencies in both Ghana and Tanzania independently sought to develop more systematic and co-ordinated approaches to SfD, the fragility of these initiatives was recognised by a German representative of the international agency that provided time-limited funding to the YDS Network in Ghana:

I have a feeling it was a bit our baby, right? Like, we supported it from the start and I have often the feeling that other donors or funders are always a bit reluctant to buy into other funders or donors babies.

Conclusions

It is beyond the scope of this single article and, more fundamentally, not for an (external) academic author to advocate or specify the instigation of SWAps in SfD, either in Ghana, Tanzania or elsewhere. Neither, as experiences in other development sectors indicate, should SWAps be seen as a 'magic bullet' to the limitations of current approaches to SfD governance (Peters et al., 2013: p885). This degree of circumspection is not, however, to underplay the value for SfD of examining the applicability of, and learning from, the extensive experience and literature on SWAps in other development sectors. As the remainder of this conclusion explores, applying the specifically meso-level 'analytic lens' offered by SWAps enables greater understanding of the possibilities of more systematic approaches to SfD governance as well as identification of issues that require further academic attention.

The need to consider more systematic approaches to SfD governance is not only a consequence of the multiple problems that can be attributed to the current prominence of project-based approaches in SfD. Perspectives offered independently by different types of stakeholders broadly supported various key aspects of SWAps, including greater local ownership, increased involvement of

domestic governments and improved co-ordination across the multiple organisations involved in SfD in both Ghana and Tanzania. However, the divergent rationales for local ownership expressed by representatives of international agencies, for example, suggests that support for key features of SWAps is, at best, uneven. Similarly, identified examples of initiatives that seek to develop more systematic and co-ordinated approaches within SfD remain somewhat piecemeal in both countries and, as the example of the YDS Network demonstrates, fragile. Experience from SWAps would suggest that any benefit derived from such initiatives would only be tangible in the longer-term (Hill, 2002; Giri et al., 2013). In the shorter-term, micro-level mistrust between, and changes in, representatives of key SfD stakeholders may be amongst a number of issues that mitigate against the emergence of more systematic approaches to SfD governance.

Beyond these exemplar barriers, three overarching issues emerge from the analysis presented in this article that would benefit from further attention, both by academics and key SfD stakeholders. The first of these issues concerns (the feasibility of any) delineation of the scope and boundaries of a 'SfD sector'. Sectoral definitions utilised in SWAps are based on national boundaries so as to pursue the replacement of donor-driven development by country-led

governance. Nevertheless, SWAps have been based on different sectoral

boundaries in different countries (Samoff, 2004; van Esch et al., 2011) and

similar flexibility could apply to any identification of a 'SfD sector'. For example,

the inclusion (or exclusion) of sports development interests and those

associated with divergent outcomes desired of SfD could depend on the

specifics of any particular country context. Further, that SfD and perhaps sport

provision more generally is unevenly distributed and subject to varied contextual

influences across different localities within countries also suggests the potential

appropriateness of identifying 'SfD sectors' within localised, as well as

potentially national, geographical boundaries. Certainly, such a consideration of

whether and how a SfD sector may be defined is not the 'semantic issue' that a

contribution to a recent SfD conference suggests (Hunt, 2015). Rather, just as

in SWAps (Samoff, 2004), any systematic approach to SfD governance requires

an associated 'governable space' (Rose, 1999).

A second substantive issue concerns the potential engagement of domestic

governments with SfD. To develop a deeper consideration of this issue than has

been evident to date, both SfD policy makers and academics could valuably

draw upon the significant array of theory, concepts and empirical evidence that

exists across both development studies and wider public policy literature. A

historical combination of globally imposed neo-liberal policies and the limited political salience of SfD have resulted in the lack of (resource) capacity amongst relevant governmental institutions in Ghana, Tanzania and in other countries. Alternatively, just as theorising in public policy literature identifies that the resource of 'treasure' is but one of a range of tools that governments can utilise (Howlett, 2010), so classifications offered by Samson (2006) and Batley and Mcloughlin (2010) suggest that governments may take various roles with regard to development that entail different capacity requirements. More broadly, such contributions are representative of further literature that points to fundamental distinctions in respect of the positions, interests and capacities of governments and NGOs with respect to development (Teamey, 2007). While SfD research could valuably draw upon on the wider meso-level theory, concepts and literature that has been introduced here, in practical terms institutional capacity building could be improved through greater clarification of the potential roles that governmental and civil society agencies can play in SfD.

From capacity building, attention inevitably turns to the third concluding issue, namely the potential contribution of international agencies to SfD governance. The influence of international agencies in those exemplar initiatives that have sought to develop systematic approaches to SfD in Ghana and Tanzania is

representative of the broader recognition and criticism that it has been international, rather than domestic, impetus that has driven the instigation of many SWAps (Cabral, 2009). These power relations are a representation of global inequalities that are recognised across SfD (Darnell, 2012) and international development more widely (McEwan, 2009). As such, there are inevitable macro-level constraints as to the extent that international agencies can be expected to imagine, let alone enact, re-oriented approaches to SfD. Alternative SfD approaches suggested within the literature include the development of more radical pedagogy (e.g. Darnell, 2012; Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013) or pragmatic changes to training approaches (Manley et al., 2014). Therefore, even when it comes to addressing macro-level issues of neo-colonialism or neo-liberalism, academic proposals have been largely orientated towards the micro-level associated with SfD projects. While the macro-level context of SfD remains stubbornly resistant to change, developing meso-level analyses may enable the academic community to prompt new thinking towards a re-orientated SfD, as this article has sought to do in respect of governance.

Potential optimism about the possibilities of changes in SfD governance needs, however, to be significantly qualified not least because the achievements of SWAps in other development sectors have largely fallen short of the aspirations

that underpinned their instigation (Cabral, 2009; Hope, 2013). The preceding analysis suggests that re-orientating governance in line with SWAps may be even more challenging given the relatively marginal status of SfD amongst international agencies, domestic governments and within the wider NGO community. Nevertheless, continuing the status quo of primarily project-based approaches to SfD is only to remake problems historically experienced in longer-established development sectors. This article has demonstrated that examining governance approaches previously enacted in other sectors has value for SfD in enabling exploration of possibilities and challenges in addressing common problems, and in identifying related and important issues that would benefit from continued consideration. Further extensive comparison with international development, broadly defined, should now be an imperative for SfD policy makers, practitioners and academics in order to develop and realise important learning for meso-level governance in this field.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] While the anonymity of interviewees is protected, reporting in the following sections identifies their nationality, location and status of their organisation as far as possible and where relevant.

[2] The distinction between development projects and organisations is important to note. International, in-country and indigenous non-governmental organisations have commonly implemented specific, and perhaps multiple, projects. However, particular organisations could have remits wider than, and longevity beyond, the projects with which they have been associated.

[3] The sacking of Ghana's minister and deputy minister for sport after the country's poor and controversial performance in the 2014 World Cup is a pertinent example of national politics resulting in the turnover of government personal.

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